

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 270733Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4310

S E C R E T PANAMA 3808

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EXDIS

E.O. XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: SNYDER AMENDMENT

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR JORDEN

1. APPROVAL BY HOUSE OF SNYADER AMENDMENT WAS CONSIDERABLE BOMBSHELL HERE. EMBASSY HAD NO FOREWARNING THAT SUCH PROPOSAL WAS IN OFFING, TO SAY NOTHING OF POSSIBILITY OF ITS BEING APPROVED. IT RAISES, NECESSARILY, QUESTION OF HOW WIDE GAP IS BETWEEN FINGER OF OUR CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON FACILITIES AND PULSE OF CONGRESS. WE ASSUME THIS WAS ONE OF THOSE MAJOR ABERRATIONS THAT OCCASIONALLY OCCUR. BUT IT POINTS TO A NEED, DOES IT NOT?

2. FORTUNATELY, DEPARTMENT WAS ABLE TO ALERT US IN TIME TO PROPOSED ACTION, AND THEN TO FLOOR APPROVAL, SO THAT WE COULD TAKE DEFENSIVE ACTION. WE WERE ABLE TO ALERT HIGHEST AUTHORITIES HERE TO WHAT WAS AFOOT AND TO WARN AGAINST PRECIPITATE REACTION. WE CITED SUCH THINGS AS NEED FOR APPROVAL BY BOTH HOUSES, OBVIOUS IMPINGEMENT ON EXECUTIVE PREROGATIVES IN CONDUCT FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ETC. RESULT WAS: (1) DECISION TO USE BALANCED UPI VERSION OF STORY RATHER THAN EFE, PRELA, OR OTHER SLANTED VERSIONS; (2) BALANCED PUBLIC STATEMENT BY GENERAL TORRIJOS IN WHICH HE REASSERTED CONFIDENCE IN PLEDGES AND GOOD FAITH OF U.S. EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO FIND FAIR AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SOLUTION; AND (3) USE OF SHORT BUT MODERATELY USEFUL STATEMENT BY DEPARTMENT

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IN OPPOSITION TO AMENDMENT.

3. AT THIS WRITING, STORY HAS NOT YET APPEARED ON STREETS OF PANAMA. BUT THAT IS ONLY HOURS AWAY. THE LIKELY REACTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS;  
A) THOSE IN THE GOVERNMENT, OR THOSE OUTSIDE LOYAL TO GENERAL TORRIJOS, WHO WISH TO SEE A JUST SETTLEMENT OF THIS VEXED DISPUTE, WILL BE GREATLY DISAPPOINTED. THEIR CONTINUING NAGGING DOUBTS AS TO U.S. GOOD INTENTIONS AND SINCERITY WILL BE SORELY TESTED. BUT I THINK THE GENERAL AND THOSE CLOSEST TO HIM WILL PRESERVE THEIR FEELING THAT THE OBSTACLES TO NEGOTIATION OF A NEW TREATY WILL BE OVERCOME. INDEED, THERE WILL BE MANY WHO WILL FEEL, AND SAY, THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT SERVES MAINLY TO MAKE CLEAR THE REALITIES OF THE ROCKY ROAD THAT REVISION OF INTER-COUNTRY RELATIONS INVOLVES. TAKING THEIR LEAD FROM THE GENERAL'S STATEMENT TONIGHT, THEY WILL PUT THE BEST FACE POSSIBLE ON THIS DEVELOPMENT.

B) THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT AN AGREEMENT--WHETHER BECAUSE THEY LIKE THE CONFRONTATIONAL AMBIANCE THAT HAS DOMINATED TREATY TALKS UNTIL THE LAST YEAR, OR BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WISH TO SEE A POPULIST--AND POPULAR--MILITARY LEADER GAIN ADDED PRESTIGE--WILL CHORTLE WITH GLEE. NOTHING COULD SERVE THE CAUSE OF THE ULTRA-LEFT AND ULTRA-RIGHT BETTER IN THIS ATMOSPHERE THAN EVIDENCE THAT THEIR BASIC POSITION HAS BEEN JUSTIFIED BY THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ONE WILL SAY THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT WANT A TREATY. THE OTHER WILL SAY THAT TORRIJOS CANNOT GET A TREATY FROM THE U.S.

4. AS FOR THE GENERAL HIMSELF, I KNOW HE HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT. BUT HE INFORMED ME TONIGHT THAT HE UNDERSTANDS THE VAGARIES OF POLITICS AS PRACTISED IN OUR SOCIETY. HE TELLS ME HE CONTINUES TO PUT HIS FAITH IN MEN WHOSE WORD HE HAS RECEIVED AND IN WHOM HE HAS TRUST. HE NAMES SEPCIFICALLY--KISSINGER, BUNKER AND JORDEN. THIS FAITH IN MEN, RATHER THAN IN INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS, IS TYPICAL TORRIJOS. HE ALSO CITED THE PUBLIC WORDS OF BILL ROGERS WHOM HE REGRETS NOT HAVING YET HAD A CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW BETTER, I NOTE THIS ONLY TO UNDERLINE THE VERY PERSONAL--AND EVEN EMOTIONAL --APPROACH THAT PANAMA'S JEFE DE GOBIERNO TAKES ON ISSUES OF THIS KIND.

5. IN THE SHORT RUN, MY JUDGMENT IS THAT TORRIJOS WILL BE UNDER HEIGHTENED PRESSURE--ESPECIALLY FROM LEFTIST ELEMENTS--AS NEWS OF THE HOUSE ACTION SPREADS. BUT HE WILL MAKE STRONG, AND I BELIEVE  
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SUCCESSFUL, EFFORTS TO KEEP THAT PRESSURE UNDER CONTROL. THERE MAY BE MINOR OUTBURSTS AND I AM SURE WE CAN EXPECT CRITICAL COLUMNAR AND EDITORIAL COMMENT. BUT I WOULD NOT EXPECT ANY MAJOR OUTBURSTS. I AND SEVERAL EMBASSY OFFICERS GOT REACTIONS THIS EVENING THAT SUGGEST STRONGLY THAT THE INTELLECTUAL REACTION WILL BE MEASURED. BUT THERE IS ALSO AN AWARENESS--AS REPORTED EARLIER TODAY--THAT THE HOUSE ACTION PLAYS DIRECTLY INTO THE HANDS OF EXTREMIST GROUPS. I JUDGE THEIR INITIAL CAMPAIGN--IF INDEED IT BECOMES AN OUTRIGHT

CAMPAIGN--WILL NOT SUCCEED.

6. IN THE LONGER TERM, OR RATHER MIDDLE TERM, WE CAN EXPECT PANAMA TO JUICE UP ITS PROGRAM OF WINNING SUPPORT FROM LATIN AMERICA AND OTHER THIRD WORLD SOURCES. IN PART, THIS WILL BE AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE OVERALL PANAMANIAN PROGRAM TO AROUSE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION TO ITS PLIGHT, TO THE RIGHTOUSNESS OF ITS CAUSE. BUT IN PART, TOO, IT WILL BE AN ELEMENT IN TORRIJOS' CONTINUING EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE EXTREMIST FORCES THAT OPPOSE HIM AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM FAIL IN HIS ATTEMPT TO WIN A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT FROM THE U.S. THE MORE HE CAN POINT TO A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE U.N., IN AN OAS MEETING IN SAN JOSE, OR IN A GATHERING IN PERU, THE MORE HE CAN CONVINCE LOCAL FORCES THAT HE IS QUOTE DOING SOMETHING UNQUOTE FOR PANAMA'S CAUSE.

7. THAT PROCESS CANNOT, OF COURSE, CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. AFTER SOME MONTHS--IF NOTHING IS HAPPENING ON THE NEGOTIATION FRONT, AND AS PANAMANIAN INCREASINGLY COME TO RECOGNIZE THE EMPTINESS OF VOTES OF SOLIDARITY AND UNITY--THEN WE WILL SURELY FACE THE CONSEQUENCES THAT HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN FORECAST BY THIS EMBASSY AND OUTLINED IN DETAIL IN THE MOST RECENT NATIONAL SECURITY ESTIMATE.

8. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE WAY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REACTS TO THIS DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO. NOTHING WOULD BE MORE SALUTORY HERE THAN A STRONG, UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE DEPARTMENT THAT OUR PLEDGES ARE GOOD AND THAT WE INTEND TO CONTINUE DOWN THE ROAD TOWARD A REASONABLE, FAIR AND EQUITABLE REARRANGEMENT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THIS SMALL BUT IMPORTANT COUNTRY. EVEN PRIVATE ASSURANCES THAT THIS WILL BE OUR COURSE WOULD BE HIGHLY USEFUL, AND MOST WELCOME. NOR SHOULD WE IGNORE THE EFFICACY OF A FEW REASSURING WORDS FROM SOME PRESTIGIOUS MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE REACTIONS--AS SEEN FROM HERE--WOULD BE A BOLD STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF THAT HE HAS NO  
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INTENTION OF KNUCKLING UNDER TO THIS CLEAR ATTACK ON THE RIGHT, INDEED THE RESPONSIBILITY, OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE UNDER OUR CONSTITUTION TO MANAGE THE CONDUCT OF THE NATION'S FOREIGN RELATIONS.

9. IN SHORT, I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN HANDLE THE REACTION OF THIS PROBLEM HERE IN THE SHORT RUN. IN THE LONGER TERM, WE SHALL HAVE TO HAVE FIRM AND POSITIVE ACTION FROM WASHINGTON. OTHERWISE WE UNDERCUT OUR FRIENDS HERE AND PLAY DIRECTLY INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE WHOSE PURPOSES ARE INIMICAL TO OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS

AND TO THOSE OF PANAMA.  
JORDEN

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